

Consumer Reports **Health**
BEST BUY DRUGS

Free Guidance for Consumers on Prescription Medicines



NEWS UPDATE

www.ConsumerReportsHealth.org/BestBuyDrugs

Diabetes Type 2 Patients: Save hundreds of dollars a year by using our *Best Buy* selections

The statistics are sobering. An estimated 24 million people in the U.S., or about 8 percent of the population, have diabetes. People with diabetes are twice as likely as those without it to develop and die of heart disease and other problems.

Diabetes also significantly raises the risk of a host of other problems including stroke, nerve damage, kidney damage and damage to the eye as well as blindness. Liver disease, impotence, poor wound healing and susceptibility to infections that can fester and require amputations of toes, feet, or part of a leg are other risks increased by diabetes.

This is why it is critical for people with diabetes, and who have been prescribed medication to treat their condition, to follow their drug regimes. Similar to our earlier analysis of drugs used to treat diabetes type 2, [Consumer Reports Best Buy Drugs recently re-evaluated these](#) drugs and found the following:

- **Newer drugs are no better.** Two drugs from a class called the sulfonylureas and a drug named metformin have been around for more than a decade and work just as well as newer medicines. Indeed, several of the newer drugs are less effective than the older ones.
- **Newer drugs are no safer.** All diabetes pills have the potential to cause adverse effects, both minor and serious. The drugs' safety and side effect "profiles" may be the most important factor in your choice.
- **The newer drugs are more expensive.** The newer diabetes medicines cost many times more than the older ones.
- **Taking more than one diabetes drug is sometimes necessary.** Many people with diabetes do not get enough blood sugar control from one medicine. Two or more may be necessary. However, taking more than one diabetes drug raises the risk of adverse effects and increases costs.

Taking effectiveness, safety, adverse effects, dosing, and cost into consideration, we have chosen the following as Consumer Reports Best Buy Drugs if your doctor and you have decided that you need medicine to control your diabetes:

- **Metformin** — alone or with glipizide or glimepiride
- **Glipizide** and Glipizide Sustained Release — alone or with metformin
- **Glimepiride** — alone or with metformin

These medicines are available as low-cost generics, costing from \$10 to \$60 a month. If you have been diagnosed with diabetes, we recommend that you try metformin first unless your health status prevents it. If metformin fails to bring your blood sugar into normal range, we recommend you add glipizide or glimepiride. Should either of those cause problems, Actos (pioglitazone) may be an option you and your doctor will want to consider. Be aware that Actos has been linked to a higher risk of heart failure, though.

For more information on prescription drugs, alternatives to high-priced drugs and *Best Buy* selections for the most common, chronic medical conditions, visit ConsumerReportsHealth.org/BestBuyDrugs.

